



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME V.

OCTOBER, 1912

NUMBER 4

EMPIRICISM AND PLATONISM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

TO THE MEMORY OF WILLIAM JAMES

ERNST TROELTSCH

UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG

During the lifetime of William James, his philosophical work, closely connected as it is with many traditions of British philosophy, made a marked impression—one might almost say, a stir—on the Continent of Europe. Since his death, obituary notices and comprehensive reviews of his philosophy have made the intellectual legacy of the departed thinker the object of still greater attention, the more because, outside of the pragmatic school itself, the interest in the writings of so fine and penetrating a mind as Bergson naturally extends itself to cognate movements of thought.

In this legacy, James's philosophy of religion stands out with special prominence, partly by reason of its contrast to the type of philosophy of religion which is traditional on the Continent of Europe, partly because of the wealth of his own new and valuable suggestions, which have been added to by a number of zealous followers. It may not be uninteresting, therefore, to the readers of this *Review*, if I try to characterize what is peculiar and new in this, the first thorough-going contribution from America to the philosophy of religion. In doing so, I shall discuss two points: *first*, the contrast between James's ideas and the European philosophy of religion; and, *second*, the positive value that the new ideas which thus emerge seem to me to have.

Before I undertake to define the difference, I must, however, point out what is common to the two systems. This common

element is, in fact, more extensive and significant than appears in James's own writings. The differences lie within the bounds of presuppositions common to both, and are not fundamental; the essential unity of the intellectual work of the modern civilized world is fully maintained. For James's philosophy of religion—and this is the common characteristic—is a true *philosophy* of religion, that is to say not a one sided sectarian or theological treatment of the subject. As with us the philosophy of religion is distinguished from the theology of the churches by setting out, not from a given theological norm of truth, but from the whole wide field of religious phenomena, so also with James. He, too, considers religion as a vast sphere of phenomena common to all mankind, within which no presumption lies in favor of minor individual circles. The goal, moreover, like the point of departure, is determined for him by no outside authority or dogma, but he compares and appraises the phenomena with entire freedom, according to a standard which the philosopher himself has first to discover and justify. The problem of this standard contains in itself, as we shall see, the difficulties which are most intrinsic to the philosophy of religion. In what has been said the third common trait has already been implied: his discrimination and his appraisal do not assume the supernaturalism of the church, nor set off a Jewish-Christian region of miracles over against a natural region devoid of the miraculous. It is the more important to emphasize this, because James himself repeatedly and positively professes adherence to supernaturalism and dualism, and by no means rejects miracles. Supernaturalism is for him, however, no exclusive attribute of Christianity, but pertains to every religion, and simply means the repudiation of rationalism and monism with their faith in law. The miraculous in James's sense has nothing to do with the miracles of Christian legend and theology. Faith in a divine government of the world, he says in one place, "of course means 'miraculous' interposition, but not necessarily of the gross sort our fathers took such delight in representing, and which has so lost its magic for us. . . . Signs and wonders and convulsions of the earth and sky are not the only neutralizers of obstruction to a god's plans of which it is possible to think." For the same reason natural religion means

for him the religious experiences received from the beauty and splendor of nature, in contrast to those which proceed from nature's hidden background and belong to Neoplatonism and Buddhism as much as to Christianity.

All this, however, imports the large conception of the philosophy of religion which has taken shape from the time of Herder and Schleiermacher, Spinoza and Hume. Setting aside every personal belief, the thinker addresses himself to the whole broad range of the actual psychological facts of religion, and, starting from the observation and analysis of these, tries to attain to normative forms of faith; leaving it the while an open question whether there are any such forms and what character they will turn out to have. Emancipation from the beliefs we happen to have inherited, comprehensive comparison of all the phenomena, determination of the meaning and content of religious phenomena by means of analysis, inquiry into the conditions under which a standard of judgment is to be framed—all this James also assumes as the only living presupposition, or "working hypothesis," in contrast to which ecclesiastical apologetics with its argument from miracles, whether it lays the greater stress on the external or the internal miracle, is a dead hypothesis.

The characteristic difference, then, must be sought within the sphere of the common presupposition; for, so far as the latter is concerned, James is distinguished from others solely by the fact that to him the presupposition presents itself as the only vital working hypothesis at present available, whereas we see in it the demand of reason, asserting itself as soon as the constraint of inherited prejudice is withdrawn. In this distinction, indeed, a hint is already given of the contrast between the two modes of thought. But it is only a hint, and, as for its effect on the thought as a whole, the difference is for the moment negligible; the result is the same in either case. The real difference can be made essentially clear only at the main point, namely, where the principle of psychological analysis and its consequences comes in. But that can be done only when we have first made clear the fundamental characteristic of the European philosophy of religion.

This fundamental characteristic may be described in a single

word as Platonic or Neoplatonic. The whole of European philosophy and science stands essentially under the influence of Platonic rationalism. This in turn presupposes, to be sure, the subjectivism and relativism of the Sophists, and in so far has its roots in empiricism; but at the same time its consistent aim is to transcend the merely actual through the demonstration that, seething and developing within it, is a rationally necessary conceptual element. Platonism proper understood these concepts only as thought-engendered intuitions and abstractions of the genuinely ideal; and it never seriously attempted to elucidate their essential reality, their relation to the experience that elaborates and contains them, their derivation from an ultimate rational basis, or rational law, of the universe. That advance was made in part by Aristotle, who taught that idea and law are immanent in experience, and derived them from the rational principle of the world by the use of the ideas of purpose and of organic development toward the cosmic principle. Neoplatonism then attached this development still more firmly to the cosmic principle by teaching that the descent from pure intangible superempiric ideality down to the world of experience is made on a kind of ladder of ideas, and that the reascent comes about through a growing knowledge of these ideas as realities. Stoicism, despite its original empiricism, eventually approximated in its theory of knowledge and its metaphysics to these same views, through its idea of a universal cosmic law governing nature and spirit, so that for European philosophy Stoicism was able to fuse with the two first-mentioned types.

This system of thought controlled all the philosophy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The relativism of the Sophists, the scepticism which appeals to the multiformity of the actual, the whole troop of radical subjectivism and empiricism, were completely routed by the Platonic school; only occasionally and uncertainly, in nominalism and in the scepticism of the Renaissance, did these features reappear. Raphael's "School of Athens" depicts European philosophy as it took shape in reaction against the Sophists and their relativism; a philosophy, that is, which points out in experience rational laws and ideas, and derives these laws from the divine cosmic reason. Here the modern

natural sciences, which in other respects pass clean beyond the horizon of antiquity, have changed nothing. With Kepler and Galileo, Descartes and Newton, the purport of science is the discovery of a rational necessity in the processes of nature. It is now rightly recognized that the conception of rationally necessary laws of nature is derived from Platonism. Even the Kantian philosophy follows the lead of Platonism when it attempts to construe these natural laws as a rational necessity of the mind, and thus to secure them against pure relativism, as well as against a materialism which annuls necessity and mind together. It is no wonder, therefore, that from the Kantian philosophy have issued once more the analogues of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism. And Neokantianism, even in its most cautious, positivist-agnostic form, is prepared to assert the rationality and necessity of the laws, referring them to the *a priori* organizing activity of the thinking subject.

Under these circumstances, it is but natural that the philosophy of religion, too, should conform to the Platonic type. For the philosophy of religion is in truth nothing other than the application of universal philosophic theory to the understanding of religion and judgment upon it. Religion in itself is without ideas and without scientific method. Hence it can never give rise to a completely independent science determined only by the indications of religion itself. It will always be necessary to apply general principles, defined on the plane of science at large. Accordingly, the European philosophy of religion, so far as it has been able to develop at all in the presence of popular mythology and of the official theology (and to filter somewhat into the latter), is throughout Platonic and Neoplatonic in nature. Stoicism, whose contributions were considerable, and especially important for ethics, was hardly felt to be different from Platonism; it represented only the more simple and popular philosophical element. As soon, therefore, as the Christian community, emerging from the obscurity of the lower and middle strata of society, felt the need of the intellectual life and sought to offer a philosophical basis for the common faith, Platonism came to the fore.

The two greatest constructive theologians of the ancient church,

Origen and Augustine, required such a basis, and both found it in Platonism. The spiritual contemplation of the eternal and necessary ideas is for Origen the very substance of all religion; and if it be asked where in this is to be found the specifically religious element, Origen would answer that it lies in the assimilation, communion, and unification of being, between the divine and the finite spirit, realized in this contemplation. The fellowship of Christian worship and life adds to this only the concrete visibility of the divine reason in the incarnate Logos, the moral laws of the Logos, and the mysteries founded by him. Under such a view a distinction is of course made between an esoteric, philosophical type of Christianity and an exoteric, mythical, ecclesiastical one. For Augustine, the mind's logical certainty of itself, which overcomes scepticism, is the most elementary expression of religion. He goes on to seek support in the Neoplatonic conception of an immanence of the divine thought in human thought, so that, by the clarification of thought itself, the ascent to unity with the divine spirit which is operative in this process follows. Complete assurance, indeed, he obtains only through the authority of the church, with its dogma, its sacraments, and its rule of life.

From Augustine down, this fundamental philosophy of religion has persisted. It has been broadened by Aristotelianism, moralized by Stoicism; but it has remained the fundamental philosophy of religion, so far as one has been needed. This foundation appeared most clearly in so-called Mysticism, which satisfied its yearning for immediateness and intensity in the religious process by an unparalleled emphasis on these fundamentals, and made the Christian dogma a mere symbol of the cosmic process, in which the potential unity of divine and human reason—the universal cosmic law—is made actual in the Christian soul through contact with the truth taught by the church. We meet a like thought in the mystics of the Renaissance, but with the specifically Christian elements completely eliminated; while the mystics and spiritualists of Protestantism have naturally introduced the historical aspect of Christianity more strongly and in various ways. The religious part of Spinoza's teaching is to be understood no otherwise, and is closely connected with the mysticism

of his day. In recent times, under the influence of the modern conception of evolution in history, Christianity has been understood as a transitional stage, or as the culmination, of a process wherein the soul apprehends the unity with the divine reason which inheres in the nature of spirit. An unbroken line runs here from Leibnitz, Lessing, and Herder to Schelling, Hegel, and Schleiermacher, and thence to the religious philosophy of today. The doctrine of Kant, too, which pre-eminently maintains the fundamental thought of Platonism, does not depart from this type in its philosophy of religion. The apprehension of the immediate unity of the finite and the infinite reason does not, indeed, form the basis here, and religion is treated as the complement of ethics, to which it is annexed; but since the rationally necessary law of the practical reason connects the finite spirit with "reason in general," the Platonic type is maintained, at least indirectly, through the mediation of the moral. Kant's philosophy of religion is a sort of grafting of Stoicism upon the Platonic theory. So far, also, as the Neokantian theology (which in Herrmann is much nearer to Count Zinzendorf than it is to Kant) finds in the moral law a general philosophical support for the underpinning of Christianity, it, too, despite its contempt for the philosophy of religion, is connected, though by a rather slender thread, with Platonism and its conceptual necessities.

The leading ideas which appear in such a philosophy of religion are the following:

1. Consciousness, as a finite concretion of the universal cosmic consciousness, and taken together with the necessary presuppositions which are *a priori* and potentially contained in it, is the source of religion. Religion is a fact of consciousness; yet not mere fact, but the result of a necessity of consciousness, in the further interpretation of which the necessity of religious conceptions is made to approximate, now to the ultimate metaphysical, now to the ultimate ethical ideas, or again is characterized as something entirely unique, and with a content which is hard to define.

2. This necessity of consciousness, or *a priori* spiritual law, by virtue of which the individual relates himself to an absolute immanent in the soul, is the kernel of religious phenomena, which

are everywhere identical, in spite of all their external diversities, accidental variations, and obscurations. This is the "essence of religion," which in various manifestations becomes variously actual, but presses on toward the pure realization of itself—a genuinely Platonic thought.

3. This essence of religion actually appears as a constantly changing and mobile phenomenon, a fact which is explained partly by the notion of empirical distortion, partly by that of necessary individualization, partly by that of an historical, evolutionary movement directed toward the realization of itself. According to the sturdiness of our underlying rationalism, we either content ourselves here with empirical classifications, or else we seek to understand and rationalize this movement like everything else. In the latter case it will appear as an evolution necessarily resulting from the relation of the spirit to the world of experience, and one in which we can recognize the stages of development.

4. As the "essence of religion" never lies quite in broad daylight, while the historical movement aims at the pure realization of this essence, questions present themselves about a complete, final, and therefore rationally necessary, realization of this "essence"—whether such a realization is possible at all, whether it has already come into existence, when and how it may perhaps be brought about by the future. This is the problem of absolute religion, and is immediately encountered so soon as consciousness is recognized as expressing rational necessities and religion is accepted as one of these necessities. For Christian theologians the difficulty then arises of construing Christianity as the absolute religion.

5. All these investigations have set out from the fact of consciousness, which, however, as already said, is more than mere fact, being a compound of both the necessary and the contingent. Such a way of thinking gains its final security only when it firmly anchors the individual consciousness, of itself always contingent, in the holding-ground of "consciousness in general," and then, on that basis, makes the compound somehow comprehensible, so that in it the elements of necessity are plainly seen to derive their origin from the absolute consciousness, and the

direction of evolution is understood as a movement toward that goal. In the background here stands the problem of the connection of finite and infinite consciousness. This problem is often called insoluble, and in that case, as in Schleiermacher, the idea of God loses its metaphysical character. When a solution is attempted, as in the Hegelian school, universal rational necessity absorbs the empirical, contingent, and free elements, so that the result is a pantheistic monism; or, as in Schelling and Schopenhauer, it becomes apparent that the compound cannot be rationally analyzed, in which case an element of irrationalism enters into the idea of God that neutralizes the rational foundation thought.

When we set before us these fundamental ideas of the European, essentially Platonic, philosophy of religion, it is at once clear how exactly opposite is the position of James. James is more than the religious psychologist who has added a new field to the philosophy of religion. He is, by the very act of making the philosophy of religion into a psychology of religion, the representative of an altogether opposite type of thought in general, and therefore of an opposite type of the philosophy of religion. James likes to call himself a radical empiricist. That means, first of all, that he describes himself as a radical antiplatonist; the implied contrast to the insufficiently radical empiricists, or agnostic positivists, is for the moment a secondary matter. The main point is opposition to all apriorism and to all belief in law in every field, to the rationalist theory of knowledge, and to any prepossession in favor of necessity and synthesis. He is a pure analyzer and empiricist, who takes the facts solely as facts, not seeking in them any rational necessity and validity in which alone the proper essence of the facts is manifested, not combining and linking them together according to rational principles and finding only in this combination the true object of knowledge. He sides with the type against which Plato contended, with the relativism of the Sophists, which naturally, with him also, turns into psychologism. He resembles the nominalistic and sceptical opposition which Platonism has always met. He has his proper, immediate root, however, in the British philosophy of strict empiricism, as Locke laid its foundations in opposition to

Descartes—who was the founder of the modern Platonism of natural science—as Hume developed it on a great scale, and as John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte brought it to wider dominion.

James does not, indeed, remain a relativist and sceptic in the sense of the Sophists. Rather, he, too, is seeking the way to normative and valid knowledge, although not by the aid of the rationalism of laws and necessities, but by means of biological evolutionism and an idealized utilitarianism. Hypotheses used in the process of knowing and verified by results, the economy achieved by logical generalizations saving the labor of thinking in particulars, principles which are helpful in the struggle for existence, and ennobling,—these give him everything that the Platonist and Kantian gets from *a priori* necessities. They give it, indeed, provisionally, and with the possibility of constant improvement, but they give it. Therein he approximates to such modern European antiplatonic thinkers as Mach and Avenarius —points of contact which have been instructively emphasized by Goldstein, in his book, *Die Wandlungen der Philosophie der Gegenwart* (1911). The aim of attaining to knowledge and to confidence in knowledge is not renounced by him, and he does not trifle as do the Sophists. But his knowledge is guaranteed solely by a practical faith, and determined only by the degree of its verification in practice. For him the individual is everything; and the individual is an element in a continuous stream which makes everything relative, and from which it can only artificially be isolated. We can merely analyze this stream, empirically classify its chief phenomena, and verify the scientific, social, ethical, religious, and metaphysical hypotheses emerging from it by assessing the amount of their practical efficiency in the furthering of life. There is no absolute unity and no absolute necessity whatsoever. Logic is only a labor-saving device, a kind of short-hand, indispensable, indeed, to knowledge, and resulting from the constitution of the mind, but indefinitely improvable. The ethical and other necessities, the values and ideals, are the more or less provisional condensation of experiences concerning what enhances, steadies, and harmonizes life. James himself calls this point of view “Pragmatism,” and has found a great number of

disciples, who hold it with intelligence and zeal. On the foundation of purely psychological analysis, which has no contemplative interest in knowing truth for truth's sake, but recognizes only a continual succession of stimuli and discharges in act, is built up a relativistic-utilitarian conception of the universe, which acknowledges that the brain intervenes in that stream with a free determination of relative values, and which includes among its values the spiritual, ethical, and religious, as expansions and enhancements of human nature. These are entirely subjective appraisals on one's own account and at one's own risk. But in their actual diffusion and in their function of expanding human nature they gain a certain measure of objective confirmation. From the purely metaphysical point of view, they remain a venture, which must be hazarded, and by which we perhaps help on the work of the cosmic Spirit.

A philosophy of religion conceived from this point of view can by its very nature be nothing else than a psychology of religion. It does not ignore the question as to the value, meaning, and future development of religion, but it proposes to answer this question with wholly antirationalistic means. Now this is the point where the "radical empiricism" of James turns not only against the more or less veiled rationalism of Plato, but also against the insufficiently radical empiricism of his own predecessors and contemporaries,—against the agnostic positivism which treats religion solely as a part of ethnology and the psychology of primitive men, that is to say, against Comte, and especially against Spencer's Darwinian evaporation of all present value in religion. While by their doctrine real experience is limited to the phenomena of the material world and of social relations, and all further belief in a transcendental world is declared illusory, James sees in such a conclusion the influence of that scientific Platonism which admits only the laws of combination of atoms, material and psychic, and which throws on the scrap-heap of romantic dreams everything that finds no room in these "necessary" combinations. If we free ourselves completely from this naturalism, with its doctrine of rational necessity inherited from a Platonism turned to natural science, then there is no reason why we should not see in religious and cognate phenomena real experiences—experi-

ences as real as those which we have of a stone or from a beam of light. The experiences of the material world lose their tyrannical exclusiveness as soon as their coherence no longer signifies a closed causality of rational necessity; and there is no reason for not treating as genuine experiences the religious phenomena that still survive in full vitality. The naturalistic, antireligious prepossession of the positivists is the last evil remnant of a Platonism become natural science. If that collapses, as from this point of view it must collapse, nothing stands in the way of a completely unprejudiced analysis of religious phenomena. This analysis will have to be a psychological one, although here again not in the sense of a constructive psychology which from the smallest elements builds up complicated structures in accordance with ideas of causal necessity, but in the sense of an analytic psychology, such as James's radical empiricism has created. As constituent parts of a continuous stream of consciousness, ever acting and reacting, the phenomena are to be isolated, analyzed, classified, and their significance for life appraised. Their eventual metaphysical meaning then forms an ultimate and independent question by itself, which, again, is to be answered only through experience, and not through the phantom of rational necessity.

So arises a type of the philosophy of religion which, both in general and in particular, is at all points opposed to the Platonic. It will now be instructive, after this general characterization, to contrast it in detail with the main positions of the platonizing philosophy of religion, as they have already been stated. This will further make plain how each of the two types forms a self-consistent whole, and how in its own way each is a logically perfect theory. One can even say that these are the two logically possible leading types, each having a peculiar serviceableness to thought, and each corresponding to a distinct side of the phenomenon in question.

The contrast to the five points presents itself in the following fashion:

1. James, too, starts from the facts of consciousness. But for him, from the point of view of the psychology of religion as well as of general psychology, consciousness is a stream of psychophysical occurrences, not to be limited and not to be resolved,

a bundle of continuous experiences in constant motion, which, starting from some physical stimulus, pass on through mental activity, and are discharged in some action. Thus disappears all *a priori* unity of consciousness, all connection between contingent individual consciousness and consciousness in general, all derivation of validity from the central unity of consciousness, all contrast between pure necessities of mind and the concomitant or underlying organic processes. In brief, everything is lacking which, as he ironically says, is peculiar to the "Platonic psychologists of the Continent."

2. Accordingly, the characterization of those facts of consciousness, or experiences, which, using the common term, he calls religious, is something quite different from the search for the "essence" and typical valid contents of religion. James takes the religious experiences in a purely empirical way, and gives a purely empirical, approximate characterization, which accumulates its marks indefinitely, and leaves the question wholly open whether religious experiences are really unitary and specific experiences. For the estimate of the value of religion this indefiniteness of characterization is entirely unimportant, since this value obviously does not depend on any unitary and necessary function which religion may be supposed to have in the system of values of consciousness, but rather on its practical and biological service in the enlarging and strengthening of human life. Such a service can be rendered, of course, just as well by a highly complex group of experiences as by a simple one. Similarly, the connection which must be assumed between religious experiences and the processes of the nerves and brain, particularly the familiar relation between strongly religious temperament and nervous abnormalities, presents no difficulty. The worth of religion and the recognition of it depend upon its actual working, not upon the demonstration that it is derived from any "source," whether psychological or zoölogical or ontological. The result is that no *idea* of religion is in fact possible. All we can have is a highly indefinite, relative description, which piles up various characteristics, and, besides, confines itself to one selected part of what is in fact an illimitable phenomenon, namely, to the sphere of individual, personal, religious feeling, which represents

what is most primitive in religion. As a criterion for getting at these characteristics, in the absence of any self-contained and necessary "essence" of religion, James uses the empirically ascertainable eccentricities, the saints, ascetics, and mystics, in whom the phenomena appear in one-sided, and often morbid, phases. The reduction and adjustment which any respectable religion will require for purposes of practical use is accomplished by life itself.

3. So, while the European philosophy of religion, from its premise of a unitary essence, seeks to comprehend the historical stages of evolution as teleological, James knows the varieties only as psychological variations, in every case dependent on general psychical condition and on nervous constitution. The great historical complexes, taken by and large, are merely accidental differences in name and external historical location. In truth, he holds, analogies and psychically conditioned varieties run through all religious systems, and are to be understood by psychological and psychophysical interpretation, not by any dialectic of self-evolving thought. Hence James treats only of those religious systems from which definite subjective testimonies and confessions of religious persons are to be had. The religion of savages and of primitive men, which for ordinary positivism is all-important, he passes by as obscure and practically unimportant, as he does the several philosophical theories of an historical evolution of the religious consciousness. So he arranges the varieties solely according to the great psychological leading types of the general constitution of the soul, and divides religious experiences into such as correspond to the type of the "healthy mind," the "sick soul," and the "divided self." In accordance with the psychological nature of his thinking and the strongly neurological character of his psychology, James emphasizes the fact that these differences exist in all systems, and do not depend on thought and its movement, but on the nervous constitution. His principle, consequently, for the classification of varieties is derived neither from a necessary movement of ideas nor from the great historic complexes, but solely from the types of nervous systems by which the religious emotional attitude is colored and determined. In the great historic systems we can speak at most

of a preponderance of this or that type, according as the founder and leading personalities have made one or another type authoritative for the auto-suggestion of their followers. Nevertheless, all this does not signify a strict neurological fatalism, since James holds that it is in some measure possible for the free will to enter into the impressions which casually present themselves. His psychology is neurological, so far as this principle can be carried through, but not mechanistic and naturalistic.

4. As James's empirical conception of the nature of religion does not deny to religion practical or biological value, so in the presence of this manifoldness of experience he recognizes the necessity of a standard of discrimination and graduation. Of course, this cannot mean a measuring of the phenomena by the standard of an absolute and rationally necessary ideal of religion, nor even an approximation to such an ideal as something to be at least postulated and contemplated as ultimately achievable. As the absolute and the rationally necessary exist nowhere, they do not exist here. Rather does the standard emerge in the vital movements and adjustments which contribute to the self-preservation and self-expansion of the race. Here the one-sidednesses of exaggerated religion are happily removed through adaptation to the totality of the interests of life, and the medial type of a moderate religiousness results. Here also those experiences gain importance as the more valuable and the more conducive to welfare which embrace the whole complex life of the soul and overcome this complexity by the power of a unitary principle. These expand, enrich, and invigorate life as can no other function of the soul. Thus the relative maximum value belongs to the individualistic redemptive type of piety found in Protestantism, or the faith which emphasizes conversion with a strong ethical verification—which, of course, is not to deny that like precious experiences are found outside of Protestantism or of Christianity. The attainment of this maximum experience is dependent, however, upon the constitution of the individual, and it will never become a universal possession of mankind, nor will it be esteemed the highest except from a point of view which sets so high a value on the unification of the divided self. Every such judgment of value is purely subjective, a hazard, a venture.

5. In all this the only question is as to the biologically ascertainable value for life of religious experiences or of the contents of consciousness. The idea of value for life takes the place of truth or validity. But, obviously, that is not the whole story. Even James has eventually to raise the ontological question. He has all the more to raise it, because really the only specific feature of the religious state that he singles out is the coloring of universal mental processes by the subject's relation to a particular object, namely, the supposed divine Power. To be sure, it might be abstractly possible to give a neurological explanation for this conception of the object, and such an explanation would do no prejudice to his estimate of the value of religion. But such explanations, like those offered by the school of Freud, based upon sexual psychology, seem to him inadequate. Thus the question remains to be answered, as to the rise of this idea of the object and its possible relation to reality; and James, himself a man evidently of strong personal religious feeling, takes it up with special interest. But whereas Platonism is compelled to answer such ontological questions by referring the idea back to the self-revelation of the absolute, active and present in the idea itself, James can meet them only in a wholly empirical way, much as people generally refer the idea of an object to the reality behind the idea, assuming that the idea was somehow produced as an impression from the object, or as the popular faith believes in divine influences on the soul in individual cases.

At this point James comes to the most original and personal chapter of his philosophy of religion. Together with all his empiricist and positivist colleagues, he is unable to find in ordinary consciousness any place where such incursion of a religious power would be possible. Therefore, he turns to the modern discovery of the subconsciousness, as possibly offering the entrance at which the divine power generates the idea of the religious object. Of course, he can present such an explanation only as a wholly personal and merely probable "over-belief." Moreover, his use of the subconsciousness, which elsewhere in modern psychology is more like a sphere split off from the normal consciousness, serving to explain apparently sudden and, in particular, pathological incursions into the superconsciousness, is altogether origi-

nal. He here approaches Myers, and the "Society for Psychical Research," which studies mystical phenomena. But in this "over-belief" it is not merely methodically instructive to observe how the antiplatonic fundamental thought makes any other solution impossible, but James has equipped the solution with another much more important antiplatonic contrast. He insists that the Platonic solution must lead to the thought of an absolute being, a law of laws, a unified cosmic authority, and thereby necessarily beget pantheism or monism or the "block-universe," in which he holds there can be merely a religious light thrown upon the cosmic universe of law, but no vital intercourse with God; only mystic feelings of unity, no divine rescue and redemption; only general ideas, no vigor of life and no voluntary resolve of faith. His antimonism, which is a corollary of antirationalism and anti-platonism, does, he says, more justice to real religious experience, and at the same time emancipates religious life from doctrines that stifle it. Indeed, as the much-discussed "Postscript" shows, it also evacuates the thought of God of all inner unity and definiteness, and does not shrink from the further consequence of polytheism, which is, as he says, the strictly empiricist idea of God.

When we consider all this, the contradiction here presented to the European philosophy of religion seems complete, as James explicitly declared it to be. If that be so, the question as to the significance of James's philosophy of religion would become the simple alternative of a choice between it and the European type, a choice in which the only question to be raised would be the general one of their respective methods.

But before, in conclusion, I take up this question, one observation must be made which will again diminish the practical difference between the two types. On each theory the result for the conception of religion is very much the same. In both cases the result is a complete reaction from dogmatic theology, church, ecclesiastical worship, ritual, sacrament, and canonical law to the element of purely personal religious attitude. The marrow of religious phenomena is understood, on both sides, in a mystical and spiritual sense; only with the Platonists the contemplative mysticism of the vision of the Absolute and Eternal

preponderates, with the empiricists the practical mysticism of experience of the mystical state, saintliness, and love of humanity. In both cases the theory emphasizes the immediateness of the religious life, in contrast to historical authorities and traditions and to sociological constructions. The historical sinks to an inciting occasion, and redemption lies in the elevation of the subject into immediate unity with the divine power. In neither case does the philosophy of religion substitute a "pure religion" for the dominant religions; it simply furnishes a solid foundation and justification for the religious life in general, leaving free its living course, which it essays to regulate only for those to whom reflective thought is a necessity. This naturally brings about a difference between the esoteric religion of the thinker and the exoteric religion of the masses. On either hand, the freedom which is secured to the heart of religion to create its own form involves a complete mutual tolerance between the religious groups and between believers within each group. This means that in the end both views see on the whole the highest, or most valuable, evolutionary form in an individualized and spiritualized Protestantism, such as has resulted from a great part of Protestant history, and itself, indeed, stands under the influence of such theories.

There abides, however, the contrast between the inner majesty of the absolutely necessary and valid, on the one hand, and practical vitality and concreteness, unimpaired by scientific abstractions or by ideas of unity or law, on the other. The one view inclines to monism and pantheism, the other to untiring activity and to living interaction between God and the soul. The one finds its demonstration in its intuitive apprehension of the necessary and the universally valid, the other in the spiritual power and effect of the mystical state. It is, in mediaeval language, the difference between realism and nominalism. It is a difference like that between Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventura. It suggests, too, the difference between Luther and Calvin. To go farther afield, one can think of the difference between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In modern German literature treating of the philosophy of religion, the difference might be illustrated by the contrast between Simmel, who has much in common with

James's psychological relativism but rejects his robust utilitarian standard of judgment and his theology of the subconsciousness, and Rudolf Eucken, who, in sharpest opposition to the psychological method, endeavors to establish a zoölogical one, and understands by this the derivation of the entire world of ideas from an historically unfolding basis of universal realities. In Simmel we have a combination of nominalistic-psychological mysticism and sophistic relativism, in Eucken a combination of Plato, Fichte, and Hegel. The contrast is therefore plainly founded on the two great, diverging tendencies in human life and thought universally; and by reason of the very agreement of both tendencies in their apprehension of what is the central religious process, that process is subjected to contrary interpretations.

This contrast of interpretations and of the theories to which they give rise—one that of a psychological positivism, the other that of an absolutist theory of knowledge—is certainly great enough to bring again before us the old alternative.

A full discussion of this question is impossible in the present article. Such a discussion would touch upon the most general philosophical principles, and has been often undertaken, and by many hands. For myself I can only accept the *a priori*, transcendental philosophy. It seems to me closely bound up with the recognition of all logical validity. Moreover, a doctrine of values in the field of ethics and aesthetics is not to be constructed without the idea of an element unqualifiedly valid, issuing from the nature of consciousness. Finally, and above all, justice to the religious sentiment is done only by a theory which does not put usefulness in the place of truth, nor substitute a quasi-physical action in the subconsciousness for the presence of God in the human spirit. In religion a relation to a whole, to an absolute, to something possessing inner necessity, is always indispensable. James himself felt this when, among other characteristics of religion, he spoke of a "reaction upon the cosmos, upon the universe," of a relation of the individual to "the first and the last word of truth," to "primal truth," to "the most primal and enveloping and deeply true," when he recognized in religion a "root of happiness in the absolute and everlasting." Such words, taken seriously, shatter James's whole theory and recall

Plato and Schleiermacher. For my part, I hold substantially to Platonism, and to that extent would still stand by the criticism which I passed on James in an address before the Congress at St. Louis on "Psychology and the Theory of Knowledge in the Science of Religion."

On the other hand, the impression of James's presentation, living, unprejudiced, saturated with reality, grows on me. I perceive that the criticism of the idea of the absolute which, though without transgressing the limits of transcendentalism, I made in my essay on the "Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religion" (2d edition, 1911), comes unintentionally rather near to that of James, so far as it deals with a standard of judgment for the history of religion. So I find it much more difficult today than in the past to incorporate the element of relative correctness in James's philosophy of religion into the structure of the transcendental, *a priori* philosophy of Kant and Schleiermacher. We are dealing not merely with the psychology of religion, but with a philosophy of religion begotten of psychologism—a method of thought in which the two things are inseparably connected, and which stands sharply opposed at every point to transcendentalism.

Nevertheless, if the fundamental principle of the Platonic system of thought is accepted, nothing remains but to sever religious psychology from the pragmatist presuppositions as to the theory of knowledge and metaphysics, and to adopt into Platonism the element of truth which pragmatism holds.

There is, it seems to me, one way in which this can be done, although I can but briefly indicate it here. The transcendental method starts from a purely psychological analysis, and from that works on to find the point where the *a priori* element of consciousness asserts itself. Such an analysis must be made without any presupposition from metaphysics or the theory of knowledge. It must proceed in purely positive and empirical fashion, and therefore can very well operate, provisionally, with the fundamental assumptions of empiricism and pragmatism. But all that is a purely provisional description and analysis of the phenomena. Now James, by retaining, as he does, in such an analysis the conception of the religious object as a residual

datum, indicates the point at which the transcendental analysis can start in and penetrate deeper. At every stage of such a procedure, James's chief virtues—his marvellous freshness, freedom from prejudice, and sharpness of observation—will be a model.

But there is one thing more which we can and must learn from James. With full justice he calls attention to the consequences of the absolute transcendental belief in law, which in its ultimate outcome transforms reality into a monistic formula expressing a universal law, and reduces religion to an abstract sense of unity, or confines its function to that of supplementing a closed mechanical universe by sundry ineffective postulates or judgments of value. In opposition to this, James rightly points out that every unsophisticated and unperturbed religious sentiment presupposes a "piecemeal supernaturalism," that is, a power distinct from universal law and operating within it as a living force. Of course, this observation does not hold good for Christianity alone; and in making it he is undoubtedly right. But even here the relief cannot come through pragmatism, which with its "pluralistic universe," its "multiverse," and its polytheism, does violence to the equally naïve basic sentiment of religion. The only question can be how, within the universal connex which issues from the Deity, to give due weight to multiplicity, irrationality, mere actuality, vital creative power. In my article on "Contingency," in Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I have referred to this task, which, in spite of its difficulty and of the repudiation of it by the prejudices of the prevailing rationalism of law, has always formed, and still forms, the chief problem of speculation. If laws and the *a priori* can be elicited from the chaos of reality only by abstraction and analysis, then, when the return is made from them to reality, all the irrational and purely fact-contents of reality must remain or must be restored to their rights. So we shall always have the "mixed universe" of which James speaks. Indeed, only so can we arrive at such mixture; by James's way it is only possible to attain to a multiplicity of irrational facts, and never to such a mixture of the rational and irrational. This mixture constituted the problem of Plato and of Neoplatonism; it is the problem of Kant, and was again em-

phasized by the aged Schelling in the final stage of his evolutionistic pantheism. Only where, under the influence of classical natural science, the *a priori* philosophy has been transformed into the mechanical monism of a "Naturphilosophie" does the problem of mixture disappear—and with it religion as well. To this James has rightly called attention. But his own solution is so radical a cutting of the knot that in consistency he ought not to recognize any mixture, but only a pure irrationality and multiplicity, which likewise nullifies religion, and is more consistently represented by agnostic positivism than by James's doctrine. In so far as from his point of view he does justice to religious experience, he also is constrained to interfuse Platonic elements in his general view.

For all that, James has set before the philosophy of religion, as well as philosophy in general, the task of giving serious heed to realities, and has filled them with justifiable mistrust of abstract theories. But, nevertheless, the abstract is the sphere of philosophy; and our task is to make abstractions fit life, not to abolish them altogether and put the chaos of reality into their place. If the philosophy of religion is to exist at all—and it is impossible to see how, in view of our distrust of all merely ecclesiastical faith and of all merely enthusiastic affirmations, we are to get on without it—then the abstractions of the transcendental method will have to stay with us. We must simply try to put into them more of the living reality.

ERRATUM.

On page 413, line 6 from below, and page 419, line 4,
for “zoölogical” read “noölogical.”